

2021 ECONOMIC REPORT

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION



DEPARTMENT OF
HIGHER EDUCATION &
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The South Central Region is comprised of 12 counties in the center of the southern portion of Missouri. The region is home to several cities including West Plains and Poplar Bluff.

The South Central Region workforce has more than 76,600 employees, making up 3 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2020, 56 percent of the workforce was female and 44 percent was male, compared to Missouri's overall 51 percent female and 49 percent male. The regional average unemployment rate in 2020 was 6.7 percent.

The workforce is getting older in the South Central Region, a trend happening throughout Missouri and the U.S. In 2020, 25 percent of the workforce was age 55 or older, up from 20 percent a decade earlier.

For the region, 6 percent of the workforce was non-white, compared to 17 percent for the state; 2 percent of the region's workforce was Hispanic or Latino, compared to 4 percent for Missouri.

In the South Central Region, 2 percent of the region's population (ages 18 to 64) speaks a language other than English at home. By comparison, Missouri was at 7 percent and the U.S. was at 23 percent.

The South Central Region has a higher percentage of the population with a disability compared to the state and the nation. For the South Central Region, 23 percent of the population has a disability compared to 12 percent in Missouri and 10 percent in the U.S.

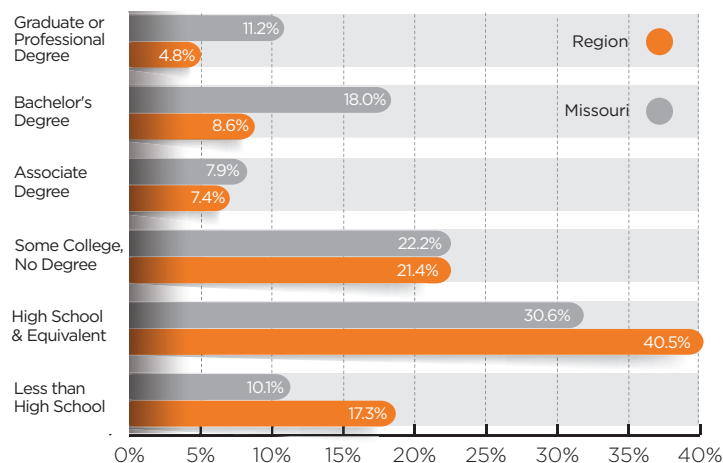
Workforce Demographics

	SC Region	Missouri	Nationwide
Average Monthly Employment in 2020	76,673	2,867,162	147,795,000
Average Unemployment Rate in 2020	6.7%	6.1%	8.1%
Female	56%	51%	50%
Male	44%	49%	50%
Non-White	6%	17%	24%
Hispanic or Latino	2%	4%	16%
Ages 55 and Older	25%	24%	24%
With Disabilities (Ages 18-64)	23%	12%	10%
Below Poverty Levels (Ages 18-64)	22%	13%	13%
Language other than English (Ages 18-64)	2%	7%	23%
Education of Associate Degree or Higher	21%	37%	41%

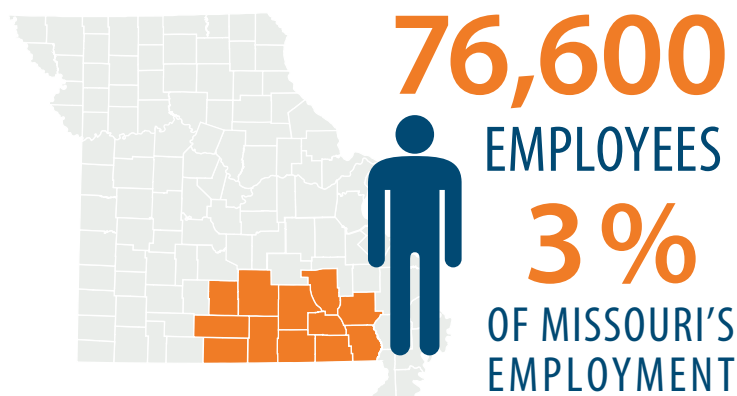
SOURCES: CENSUS ACS 2019-5YR EST.; LEHD 2ND QUARTER; BLS LAUS 2020

Educational attainment rates for the South Central Region are lower than those of the state in regards to bachelor's or advanced degrees. Twenty-one percent of the region's population, age 25 and older, has an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree compared to 37 percent for the state.

Educational Attainment



SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 2019 5-YEAR ESTIMATES

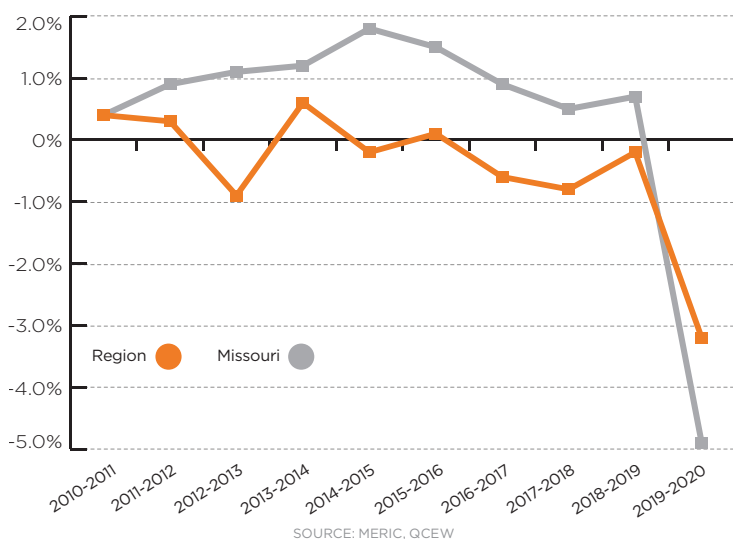


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INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The South Central Region averaged over 57,200 jobs in 2020. The region lost almost 1,900 jobs from 2019 to 2020, resulting in a 3.2 percent employment decrease. Missouri employment decreased by 4.9 percent in that time. From 2016 to 2020, the South Central Region averaged a -1.2 percent annual growth for an overall decrease of 4.8 percent; during that same period Missouri's employment declined by 2.9 percent.

South Central Employment Annual Growth Rate



Health Care and Social Assistance continues to be one of the largest employing industries in the region with over 12,200 jobs in 2020 and a 0.6 percent annual growth rate since 2016. *Manufacturing* is the second largest industry in the area with over 7,700 jobs, even though it has lost 486 jobs since 2016.

The *Retail Trade* and *Educational Services* industries have also been losing employment with a decline of 307 and 277 jobs, respectively, since 2016. Most of the industry sectors in the South Central Region have declined since 2016.

South Central Region Top Employing Industries

Industry	Employment 2016	Employment 2020	Net Change	2016-2020 Empl. CAGR	2019 Annual Wages
Health Care & Social Assistance	11,956	12,231	275	0.6%	\$32,460
Manufacturing	8,223	7,737	-486	-1.5%	\$37,680
Retail Trade	7,353	7,046	-307	-1.1%	\$26,340
Educational Services	5,961	5,684	-277	-1.2%	\$31,224
Accommodation & Food Services	4,753	4,566	-187	-1.0%	\$16,044
Public Administration	2,965	2,876	-89	-0.8%	\$32,784
Wholesale Trade	2,025	1,821	-204	-2.6%	\$48,276
Finance and Insurance	1,698	1,709	11	0.2%	\$45,492
Transportation & Warehousing	1,513	1,376	-137	-2.3%	\$38,388

SOURCE: LEHD-QWI, 2019-2020 2ND QUARTER

LOCATION QUOTIENT

To understand the major industries within a region, an analysis of industry concentration or clustering can be useful. The Location Quotient (LQ) describes the concentration of an industry in a geographic region, in relation to the nation, with 1.0 being the national average. Industries higher than 1.0 indicate a concentration.

The South Central Region has higher concentrations in *Wood Product Manufacturing*, *Forestry and Logging*, *Gas Stations*, *Machinery Manufacturing*, *Nursing and Residential Care Facilities*, and *General Merchandise Stores*.



2020 South Central Region Location Quotients

Industry	Employment	Location Quotient
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,615	14.7
Forestry & Logging	79	5.1
Gasoline Stations	1,234	4.8
Machinery Manufacturing	1,027	3.5
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	2,717	2.9
General Merchandise Stores	2,013	2.4
Bldg. Material & Garden Equip. Dealers	914	2.4
Social Assistance	2,749	2.4
Administration of Human Resource Programs	492	2.2
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	1,122	2.1
Postal Service	351	2.1
Truck Transportation	803	2.0
Admin. of Environmental Quality Programs	166	1.8
Mining (except Oil and Gas)	88	1.8
Credit Intermediation and Related Activities	1,178	1.6

SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, QCEW

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Projected growth by industry helps to identify future employment needs for an area. Projections indicate that the largest growth industries in the South Central Region will be *Social Assistance*, *Ambulatory Health Care Services*, *Food Services and Drinking Places*, and *Administrative and Support Services*.

South Central Region Largest Growth Industries 2018-2028

Industry	Employment		Change	
	2018 Estimated	2028 Projected	2018-2028 Numeric	Percent
Social Assistance	3,737	4,703	966	25.9%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	3,019	3,896	877	29.0%
Food Services & Drinking Places	4,458	5,180	722	16.2%
Administrative & Support Services	1,626	2,113	487	30.0%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	1,310	1,466	156	11.9%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	854	978	124	14.5%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	551	668	117	21.2%
Building Material & Garden Equip. & Supplies	941	1,049	108	11.4%
Transit & Ground Passenger Transportation	203	299	96	47.5%
Gasoline Stations	1,165	1,247	82	7.1%

SOURCES: MERIC INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

PROJECTED GROWTH BY INDUSTRY HELPS TO IDENTIFY FUTURE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS FOR AN AREA.

OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS

MERIC produces occupational projections that estimate labor demand over a 10-year period. MERIC categorizes these occupations using its Now-Next-Later method to help job seekers understand the training, education, and experience requirements for various occupations.

Now jobs typically require short-term on-the-job training, little to no experience, and/or a high school diploma. Now occupations include *Cashiers*, *Personal Care Aides*, and *Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers* which lead the way in total openings. *Personal Care Aides*, *Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs*, and *Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food* are projected to be the fastest growing Now occupations over the next decade.

Next jobs typically require a non-degree certificate, associate degree, apprenticeship, some experience, or moderate- to long-term training. *Secretaries and Administrative Assistants*, *Nursing Assistants*, and *Cooks* will have the most openings for the Next category of occupations. *Physical Therapist Assistants*, *Cooks*, *Restaurant*, and *Medical Secretaries* are the fastest growing Next occupations.

Later jobs typically require a bachelor's degree or higher. For Later occupations, *Registered Nurses*, *General and Operations Managers*, and *Elementary School Teachers* will have the most openings. *Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents*, *Nurse Practitioners*, and *Software Developers, Applications* are the fastest growing Later occupations.

South Central Region Fastest Growing Occupations



NOTE: OCCUPATIONS WITH NET INCREASE OF LESS THAN 50 ARE OMITTED

SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2018-2028

★ DENOTES OCCUPATIONS TOP TEN ONLINE JOB ADS FOR 2020-2021 IN THE REGION AND WITHIN THE NOW-NEXT-LATER CLASSIFICATIONS

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

South Central Region Long-Term Occupational Projections by Top Openings

Occupation	2018 Estimated Employment	2028 Projected Employment	Growth Openings	Exits	Transfers	Total Openings	Median Wages
NOW							
Cashiers	2,805	2,780	-25	249	278	525	\$19,214 ★
Personal Care Aides	2,640	3,449	809	225	199	505	\$21,300 ★
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,694	2,043	349	149	184	368	\$18,726 ★
Waiters and Waitresses	960	1,038	78	69	122	199	\$18,482
Retail Salespersons	1,358	1,361	3	78	120	198	\$23,515 ★
NEXT							
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	1,754	1,566	-188	85	101	167	\$27,673
Nursing Assistants	1,078	1,145	67	60	65	132	\$22,031 ★
Cooks, Restaurant	725	898	173	43	72	132	\$19,898
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	975	990	15	40	71	113	\$35,802 ★
Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other	841	807	-34	34	62	93	\$25,678
LATER							
Registered Nurses	1,573	1,781	208	46	43	110	\$56,217 ★
General and Operations Managers	865	913	48	19	59	83	\$60,171 ★
Elementary School Teachers	1,056	1,028	-28	32	44	73	\$37,858
Substitute Teachers	530	517	-13	30	29	58	\$22,590
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	528	544	16	16	36	54	\$34,523

SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS 2018-2028

★ DENOTES OCCUPATIONS IN THE TOP TEN FOR 2020-2021 ON-LINE JOB ADS IN THE REGION & WITHIN THE NOW-NEXT-LATER CLASSIFICATION

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For more information, visit
meric.mo.gov or dhewd.mo.gov



This report was prepared by the staff of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) as part of the Missouri Workforce Report. All data in this report was current at the time of publication and is subject to revision. Additional details on data sources can be found in the full report.

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